

men. "He hasn't doused his gill, has he?" "No," replied Inspector Val, "there's a bend at that point."

CHAPTER XIX.

How London Bill Took a Pal. Perhaps the golden rule of all detective work is, never let the detected one detect. Inspector Val was alive to this ordinance of his craft.

Storri, who had been studying London Bill as hard as ever that crackling night, was studying him, rebegan in earnest. He now laid bare the proposal in its every corner, and showed London Bill the plans and maps, including the valuable cross-section of the Treasury building to street level.

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"I shall dig so as to undermine an end of one of those steel slabs that make the vault's floor, running my tunnel for the rear end of the vault. The weight of the gold will force down the slab when lifted. I'll open that vault like undermining the cover of a chest, only the cover will drop from the bottom instead of lifting from the top. The minute that slab of steel drops six inches the sacks of gold will begin sliding into our tunnel of their own accord. You needn't worry about my part of the job; I can take thirty millions out of the vault if you can get them to the mouth of the drain."

"I can get them to the mouth of the drain," responded Storri confidently, "and another thirty million, a real limit to our operations is the yacht itself. The one I have in mind will carry only one hundred tons, and thirty million in gold makes sixty tons, to say nothing of the ship's stores and coal."

"What place will you head the boat for when the job's done?" "That," said Storri, "I shall leave to be settled in the open Atlantic. The question now is: Are you going with me? You'll see that your share is to be a million."

"One-third?" said London Bill, with the ring of complaint in his voice. "One-third?" returned Storri with emphasis. "Where else can you get one million for ten weeks' digging and one month's cruise in a yacht? Besides, there will be a dozen others to share, to say nothing of the yacht and what it costs to coal her and buy her stores. Come, now, London Bill, put out a small, hairy hand and gave Storri a squeeze of acquiescence that was almost a mate for the grip bestowed upon our nobleman by Pichard that snow-freighted day in November.

"I'm with you, live or die," said London Bill; "an' I never weaken, an' never split on a pal."

London Bill put out an hour discussing plans. There were to be no more men brought into the affair until late in May. London Bill would come to Washington and commence his tunnel work in June. Besides, the employment and require care; it was best to have plenty of time.

"Because," explained London Bill, "if these maps an' drawings ain't accurate to the splinter of an inch, it may throw me ahead in my digging, an' that case I'd need an extra week or so to find myself."

Storri coincided with the view, but added that the yacht was to-day. Said London Bill, "I'll be better than in May. I'll be busy in my tunnel in May, and won't have time to come out. Here's what I'll do: I'll call up Dan right now. Dan's an old sailor, an' we'll get the gang call him Steamboat Dan. I'll call Dan, an' put him into the play. Then when the time comes, Dan will get you the men, an' of the right proper sort. There won't be one of 'em who hasn't done his job."

"But," remonstrated Storri uneasily, "are you sure of this Steamboat Dan?" "I wouldn't be lusing' in his crib else," responded London Bill, "no, Dan's a sure thing. Besides, I'm not going to put him wise; I shall only tell him to do whatever you ask, whenever you show up."

London Bill called Dan, and the trio broadened their confidences in each other. The first thing Dan gave his word for whatever was required; Storri had but to appear and issue his orders.

"You'll be in at the finish, Dan," said London Bill; "an' for the others, pick out a few men, a bunch-bar, or 'jimmy,' about two feet long. Besides these suspicious implements, there were food, a flask of whisky, another to contain the lamp, to make up the basket's furniture."

"The laborer entered the drain's mouth, and when beyond chance of observation from without, he paused as aforesaid had Storri to light his lamp. As the man lit the lamp, he had identified the features of London Bill, celebrated state-blower, box-worker, and 'peterman,' presently about to begin his million-dollar job over which he and Storri had shaken hands. Having lighted his lamp, London Bill journeyed on his way until the same bend in the great drain that had hidden Storri shut him out from the world."

London Bill splashingly proceeded to the second turn in the drain; from that point he counted the manholes until he stood beneath the one from which he was measuring with the tape. As he was about to enter the drain, he was startled by the sight of a man, who he recognized as Dan, the man who had been with him in the street. A turn or two and a brisk walk of ten minutes found him in Mulberry Bend. Dan walked more slowly, and by the way he was carrying a block ahead. The great thief-taker rounded a corner, and albet Dan made no effort to overtake him, he was scrupulously to make the same turn. As he came into the street he glanced about for Inspector Val; that personage was nowhere to be seen. Dan kept on his way, and before he had journeyed another block Inspector Val had caught up with him from the rear, and passed him. Two doors farther and Inspector Val entered an Italian restaurant; Dan, after going fifty yards beyond and returning, stepped into the same place. As he laid his hand on the restaurant's door, he shot a swift look up and down the street. There was no one in view whom he knew, and Dan brought a breath of relief.

"This being a tool, no hit with me," sighed Dan, "but will any sport show me how to sidestep it?" "As no sport was there to hear the plaint of Dan, the latter must have despaired of a reply before he could get the question. Once more he cheerfully greeted Inspector Val, and the two withdrew to a private room. "Dan," said Inspector Val, when they were seated at a table with a flask of chianti before them, "I needn't tell you that you're still wanted for that trick you turned in Chicago, or remind you of the many little things I've overlooked in your case in New York."

"You'll put into this game about the middle of May, will you get the collar. You have my word for it, the one I'm after."

"Your word goes with me, Inspector," interjected Dan, plainly relieved, and bending to his chianti as though after all it might not be red polson. "Good!" my word goes with you—which is fortunate for you. These are your orders: You're to say never a word; and you're to proceed with this as though nothing were the wind. As fast as you see anything you will find that I'll call for it. Do whatever this black-bearded larty asks; go with him as far as he wants to go, and go with your eyes shut. I'll step in and get him when the time comes; the one I'm after. Now you understand; say nothing, do whatever the black-beard desires; and when I want to see you I'll send. And be careful about London Bill; he's foxy. That was why I let you go by my management ago; I didn't know but Bill was fly enough to tell you here. He'll be gone, however, in a day, or at the most two, and then you'll have no more risk with him."

"How did you know Bill was gone?" "I know it just as I know that you, about five fifteen, will pick up a dozen or more pals who are whole crooks and half sailors; that you will then leave on a boat, probably a steam yacht. My twenty-six, bound for Washington; and that you'll be in the city by May twenty-six, in it to be pulled off May twenty-seventh to twenty-ninth inclusive."

"You know more in me, Inspector," observed Dan, with a wry smile. "I didn't I wouldn't be telling you what to do. That's all, Dan; have you got your orders straight?" "Straight as a gun," declared Dan, wiping the last drops of the chianti from his mouth.

"Screw out then," commanded Inspector Val, "and come only when I send for you."

Two days later, a laborer, clean-shaven and of rather superior exterior, fastened a tape measure to the iron cover of a manhole that opened into the drain that ran by the side of the treasury building. Fastened, the laborer unwound it one hundred feet. Then he began to rewind the tape into its circular box. As he followed the incoming tape toward the end that was fastened to the manhole, he went, he paused for the ghent of a second squarely opposite the little basement doorway in the treasury building, where the old watchman stood, watching him with his eyes.

Storri was told of the gold inside. The old watchman, being on duty now, was standing in that same doorway, smoking the self-same pipe, and had his ignorant eye busily fixed upon the laborer with his measurements. As the laborer paused abreast of the door, he glanced down at the tape.

"The even seventy feet from the center of the manhole to the center of the door, he measured, and murmured, 'I thought he registered the figures in his mind.' And the old watchman, and the pedestrians hurrying along the pavement, thought the laborer busy with his measurements. As the laborer paused abreast of the door, he glanced down at the tape.

"That night, had it not been for the moonless dark of it, you might have seen the moose of a laborer who had been so concerned with tape-measures and distances near the treasury building, a long shallow basket stouilly woven of willow on his arm, making his way through the investigations of Storri. The basket concealed a short pickax of the sort that miners use, a little spade such as children play with, a saw, a bunch-bar, or 'jimmy,' about two feet long. Besides these suspicious implements, there were food, a flask of whisky, another to contain the lamp, to make up the basket's furniture."

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"No, Inspector," replied Dan, sorrowfully, "I needn't tell you 'em all, 'em all. 'I'm dead on 'em all. 'Is it? Give it a name.'" "Do you know what that black-bearded man wanted in your place?" "No," said Dan, "I don't."

"He came to meet London Bill, and you floor-managed the play." "But I don't know what he wanted of Bill," said Dan, a bit staggered. "Well, I know what he wanted of Bill. And I know what he will want of you. I'll tell you what you are to do; and if you cross me, or fall down, it will mean several spaces in Joliet, so have a care. I'll put you easy on one point. Neither you, nor London Bill, nor any of the pals

ing thrifty and bawling expense, laid up the yacht in a shipyard on the Harlem River. The yacht's name was Zulu Queen. The Zulu Queen measured 110 feet over all, and since she was of unusual beam her draught was light. In a beam she the Zulu Queen would all but roll her pounded until one feared for her safety; in smooth water, full steam ahead, she could snap off seventeen knots. She had a twenty-foot launch, equal to fourteen knots for the spring and summer. She was a sewing machine. Altogether there were worse as well as better boats upon the sea than the Zulu Queen.

Croesus Jr., disliking expense, as noted, did not care to keep the Zulu Queen in commission. And yet the rust of retirement was eating into her value! A yacht, a horse and a woman, to keep at their best, should be constantly in commission. Croesus Jr. offered the Zulu Queen to Storri for the spring and summer. Storri to foot the bills. This was a sagacious move on the part of Croesus Jr., and meant to kill a brace of birds with one stone. He would keep the Zulu Queen at another's cost, thereby avoiding the wharf rent as well as the rust of her banishment; also he would please a nobleman. Storri accepted the disinterested offer of the Zulu Queen from Croesus Jr.; that was just before he met London Bill.

After meeting that eminent bandit Storri drove to Harlem and gave orders for overhauling the Zulu Queen, as well as for storing her and coaling her. He limited her lockers and bunkers. She was to be made ready for the crew and cruise by May first. Storri was armed with the written order of Croesus Jr., and the steward people offered no demur. They charged all bills in true maritime fashion to the Zulu Queen, and neither to Storri nor yet Croesus Jr., the latter provident young person must finally face the expense—a financial disaster which Croesus Jr. never foresaw, albet Storri was not so blind. As London Bill piles darksome spade and pick and pinch-bar, the Harlem ship men are furnishing and coaling and storing the Zulu Queen.

Storri said nothing of London Bill and the Zulu Queen to the San Reve. He had well nigh given up the club, being willing to postpone all chance of meeting either Mr. Harley or Richard, and was therefore a frequent visitor to Grant's place—a social situation that pleased the San Reve vastly.

The San Reve used to dog Storri when he left her; and, inasmuch as she never allowed the Harley house to be out of its vicinity, her jealousy began to sleep. But the San Reve, while she haunted the steps of Storri, could not always follow his thoughts, and they went often to the Harley house. There he and the Harley ever on his mind; each day served to intensify his hatred for Mr. Harley, and to render more sultry that passion for Dorothy which was both love and hate. Little by little his lawless imagination suggested methods by which he might have revenge on Mr. Harley and gain possession of Dorothy; and the methods, so suggested, the ingenious cogs of a wheel, crashed into that other enterprise of gold which had enlisted the Zulu Queen and London Bill. The thought of revenge on Mr. Harley, and a physical conquest of Dorothy the beautiful, grew and broadened, and extended itself like some plant of evil in Storri's heart. It worked itself into leaf and twig and bud of sinful detail until the execution thereof seemed the thing feasible; with that, the San Reve began to wear a look of criminal triumph in anticipation.

The San Reve observed this latter phenomenon and read it for a good sign, holding it to be evidence of the non-entirety of her hander relations, and also of clearing the skies of stocks. It spoke of fair weather in both love and business, and the San Reve was at considerable care not to disturb Storri with either query or comment.

"What should be better," mused Storri with that leer which Satan gave him, "than to carry away the gold of these pig Americans, and the daughter of one of them on the same night? We should be off the coast of Africa in a fortnight, and were I to tire of her I could sell her to the Moors. Who would hear of her after that?"

Thus did Storri rear his sinful castles in the air; and as he brooded his black designs, smoking his cigars and tossing off his brandy in silence, the San Reve sat drinking him in with adoring gray eyes, pleading herself by conjecturing his meditations, and going miles to leeward of the truth. Had the San Reve but guessed them, there might have descended the interrupter of one of our sinners suffered a postponement of once grizzly and grim.

Richard, about this time, troubled the club with his presence no oftener than Storri's, and the daughter of one of them. He must see so much of Dorothy at either her own house or Bess Marklin's, he was left scanty time for clubs. It is wonderful how love will engage the hours and occupy the faculties of a man, and how the faculties of a man are less of routes, and Inspector Val led him past the Treasury building, across the White Lot, between the Monument and the White House, until they stood at the drain's mouth, of which they have heard so much. The team was rushing forth a clayey gray.

"Do you see?" asked Inspector Val, pointing to the stream. "Yes," said Richard, waxing impatient, as a man when roused from loving dreams to consider a question of sewage.

"The color," replied Inspector Val, "that shows our man to be industrious at his task. No, no explanation now; on the 27th of May we'll come again, and the drain itself will furnish a solution to the puzzle."

"But the public," explained Senator Gruff, disagreeing, "are as sheep; the managers of the party are the wolves. The howl of one wolf in politics is a graver moment than the bleating of many sheep."

"But the sheep are the more numerous," said that man who is called Senator Gruff. "What cares the wolf how many the sheep be? The wolves, I tell you, win."

Senator Hanway, full of inborn fortivities, still hung in the web of doubt. "Would it not be wise," he argued, "to claim the public's attention with some new unusual proposition? Might not the public, being wholly engaged thereby, forget finance?"

Senator Gruff thought this among things possible; at least it might be tried. Whether it would be done, or Senator Hanway would be compelled to disclose his attitude on Silver versus Gold. It was the decision of Senators Hanway and Gruff that the former should bring up the State discussion the resolution concerning that Georgian Bay-Ontario Canal. Credit Magellan was dead and gone, and had been since the "bear" fall, and against Northern Consolidated. But no one in the Senate, no one indeed not the osprey pool, had heard of Credit Magellan. Therefore, Senator Hanway could handle the canal resolution as a thing by itself. It could be offered as a measure of importance, not only nationally but internationally, and to all the world. Senator Hanway would force no vote; but he would be heard, and his Senate friends and allies would be heard. There should arise such a din of statecraft that the pulpit in the country must be impressed with the canal as a subject of tremendous consequence. The public intelligence might thus be made to center upon the canal. The statecraft of Senator Hanway, it did not wholly swallow up in the common regard, that dangerous query of finance.

"You may be right," observed Senator Gruff. He said this dubiously, for he was sure as was Senator Hanway of either a public interest or its direction touching the canal. "It will be a novelty; and the public is as readily caught by a novelty as any rustic at a fair. But you might better get to work at once, I had a word from the governor yesterday; they urge definite utterance on the money question. They say they must know which it is to be in order to select timber for the delegations of the State to name silver delegates if you mean in the eleventh hour to declare for gold."

Senator Hanway brought up his Georgian Bay-Ontario canal and talked a profound hour. Other Senators followed, and the matter of the canal was discussed three full days. Then it was sent back to the Foreign Committee without a vote. But the object of the discussion had been reached. Canal took the place of money in the popular imagination. Senator Hanway, his name gaining favorable place in every paper, particularly in the Daily Tory, became a prodigious personality by acclamation. The most besotted of Governor Obbinate's adherents now conceded the superiority of Senator Hanway, and two or three States which held their conventions about this time instructed their delegates to vote for him as a unit. Mr. Harley and Senator Gruff, being not in the number, were jubilant; they complimented and extolled the acumen that substituted canal for finance as a popular shout.

"You've got it," ejaculated Senator Gruff, slapping Senator Hanway on the shoulder with a freedom dashed by statesmen among themselves; "the ticket is as good as made, with Hanway at the head. But Frost on for Vice President, and it will be all over but the shouting. Senator Hanway was of one mind with Senator Gruff; he could discover no gap in his fences through which defeat might crowd.

"It's as it should be, John," observed Senator Hanway, when one evening he and Mr. Harley were alone in his study. "I had just left, bearing an elaborate interview with Senator Hanway, in which the Georgian Bay-Ontario canal was displayed as the question paramount and pre-eminently to all others. The Daily Tory, intended for the next issue of the Daily Tory. 'It would be hard, indeed,' continued Senator Hanway, 'to be wiped out in politics just as we were wiped out in stocks. I can look on present papermen calmly enough if it is to be followed by White House for four years. It would be our turn then to issue German defiances, and use Monroe to milk the market.'

"Yes," assented Mr. Harley, a greedy twinkle in his eye, "a White House should place us on high ground." Mr. Harley, being thus reminded of the osprey pool, remarked that he received a line that afternoon saying the mysterious builder of the corner in Northern Consolidated had been discovered in Robert Lance Bayard. The old gray buccaneer would at once learn the terms upon which they might ransom themselves. "But it's so much as three millions for our share," said Senator Hanway, "it will cut us both off at the roots. Three millions would take the last bond and the last share of stock in our boxes."

"The offer will be made for a million a man," said Mr. Harley, "but should Mr. Bayard refuse, there's no help. He holds us at his mercy."

"Absolutely!" assented Senator Hanway, with a sigh. Then in livelier manner he said, "I observed, we must consider ourselves with a Presidency. That Georgian Bay-Ontario Canal was a fortunate thought. My nomination is certain; and the success of the ticket with the people seems quite as sure. We must effect a loss in stocks by this mighty profit in politics."

"Changing the subject," continued Senator Hanway, "young Storri seems to be the accepted lover of Dorothy. I'm afraid that if I observed, we must consider ourselves with a Presidency. That Georgian Bay-Ontario Canal was a fortunate thought. My nomination is certain; and the success of the ticket with the people seems quite as sure. We must effect a loss in stocks by this mighty profit in politics."

"When will you appoint the wedding?" asked Senator Hanway. "I'll attend to that. I take it, should the come for my advice, I shall vote for expedition. Marriage is so much like shooting a rifle that one ought not to hang too long on one's aim." Richard received a wire from Mr. Bayard, calling him to New York. The next day he was closeted with the ticker-king at 30 Broad.

"We have never," said Mr. Bayard, "declared our respects in the corner in Northern Consolidated." (Concluded Next Sunday.)

CHAPTER XX. How Storri Foolishly Wrote a Message. Governor Obbinate being stubbornly and openly for gold, party opinion, disliking concealment and skulking mystery, began to burn the grass of imperious inquiry about the feet of Senator Hanway. Men could understand a deal-bug or a silver-bug, and either embrace or tolerate him according to the color of their convictions. But that monstrous insect of finance, the straddle-bug, pleased no one; and since Senator Hanway, whose patriotism was self-interest and who possessed no principle beyond the principle of personal aggrandizement, was on every issue a straddle-bug, finance first of all, our sinners, who commenced to taste troublous days. Senator Gruff urged him to declare for gold. "You will have two-thirds of the better element with you," said Senator Gruff, "and by that I mean the richer element."